

ILLINOIS EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL
February 23, 2009 - 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
National Louis University
122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago Atrium, Chicago, Illinois

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Kristi Adell (for Jo Anderson), Awilda Adorno, Martha Arntson, Carol Auer, Lori Baas, Barbara Bowman, Jeanna Capito, Tim Carpenter, Martina Casey, Lauri Morrison-Frichtl, Phyllis Glink, Vinni Hall, Gloria Harris, Ava Harston, Eboni Howard, Colleen Jones, Terri Lawrence, Suzanne Logan, Janet Maruna, Mark McHugh, Cordelia Meyer, Harriet Meyer, Janice Moenster, Carolyn Newberry Schwartz, Geoff Obrzut, Sylvia Puente, Claudia Quigg, Anthony Raden, Elliot Regenstein, Vanessa Rich (for Mary Ellen Caron), Gina Ruther, Linda Saterfield, Jodi Scott, Sara Slaughter, Adele Simmons, Luz Maria Solis, Teri Talan, Kathy Villano, Judith Walker Kendrick, Maria Whelan, Kay Willmoth, Josie Yanguas

By phone: Debbie Meisner-Bertauski

Other: Sonya Anderson, LaDawn Burnett, Gaylord Gieseke, Diana Rauner

Absent: Ann Alvarez, Robert Blade, Representative Elizabeth Coulson, George Davis, Ric Estrada, Representative Deborah Graham, Senator Don Harmon, Kay Henderson, Michael Johnson, James Kaplan, Trinita Logue, Barry Maram, Maureen Marx, Rick Pappas, Barbara Quinn, Jerry Stermer, Sheridan Turner, Mark Valentine

11:00 - 11:10 Plan for the Day (Harriet Meyer)
(10 mins)

- Introductions
- Adoption of October 2008 meeting minutes

Harriet Meyer welcomed Council members, as did George Litman, Interim Provost of National Louis University. Harriet then extended an official welcome to LaDawn Burnett, Senior Policy Advisor to Governor Quinn, and thanked her for attending the meeting. Harriet read a portion of the minutes from the February 9, 2009 Council Executive Committee meeting, describing Governor Quinn's positive comments about the work of the Council. After introductions, Harriet reviewed the agenda for the day's meeting. Harriet then asked members to review the minutes from the October 27, 2008 Early Learning Council meeting. After a correction in the accounting of members present in those minutes, Claudia Quigg moved to accept the minutes with revisions, and Luz Maria Solis seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

11:10 – 11:25 Updates (Elliot Regenstein)
(15 mins)

- ISBE recommended FY2010 Budget

Elliot Regenstein asked members to review the ISBE FY2010 budget recommendation summary in their packets. He stated that ISBE requested an increase of \$12.5 million for the Early Childhood Block Grant, and advocates will continue to work for the full \$45 million in their efforts in Springfield.

- Higher Education Act - Early Childhood Professional Development Taskforce

Elliot reported that the Higher Education Act calls for the governor of a state to establish or designate an existing entity to serve as the State Early Childhood Education Professional Development and Career Task Force. Elliot commented that the Executive Committee began discussions about the HEA requirements at their meeting earlier in February, and continued the conversation at another meeting held last week. An ad-hoc work group will continue to discuss this. He stated that this may or may not come back to the Council for review, so anyone interested in working with this group should contact Deanna Durica by February 27 so that they have the opportunity to provide input.

- Follow-up from October Council meeting
 - Special Populations committee recommendation
 - Linguistic and Cultural Diversity committee recommendation

Elliot brought the Council up-to-date on two recommendations from the October Council meeting. A recommendation from the Special Populations committee that would reduce the number of days it takes for young children, ages 3 to 5, to receive an evaluation for special education services from the Local Education Agency was submitted. He stated that the federal law gives states the option to establish their own time frame, and that currently the state law requires the determination of eligibility and the IEP meeting to be completed within 60 school days from the date of parental consent. The Special Populations Committee recommended changing this from school days to calendar days. He stated that due to the statutory requirements of this request and its impact on K-12 programs, it was decided that further discussions would need to occur with key people who have shaped special education policy at the K-12 level (including ISBE, school districts, and parent advocates). As a result, a meeting was convened in early December of 2008 and attended by members of the Early Learning Council, the Special Populations Committee, ISBE's Special Education and legal staff and the Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Students with Disabilities. Meeting participants discussed what the potential consequences would be if they focused only on making the change from 60 school day to 60 calendar days for the 3- to 5-year-olds in the state. Information on this issue has been shared with Representative Elizabeth Coulson, who agreed to initiate legislation on this issue. She has convened a meeting of interested stakeholders, including the original opponents. Elliot continued the update with information on the Linguistic and Cultural Diversity committee's fiscal year 2010 RFP recommendations, which included language requiring staff working with English language learners to hold a bilingual or ESL endorsement in addition to a Type 04 certification. He stated that, because of the impact of this recommendation, the Executive committee referred it back to the Linguistic and Cultural Diversity committee for them to develop a timeline and phase in plan for the bilingual/ESL requirement. The committee co-chairs agreed to present a plan by the fall ELC meeting.

11:25 – 11:45
(20 mins)

Recommendation and Report

(Harriet Meyer)

1. Joint Infant Toddler and Workforce Development committee: Infant and Toddler Teaching Requirements (Jeanna Capito & Jan Maruna)

Next, Harriet Meyer asked Council members to review the updated recommendation for Infant Toddler teacher requirements. She asked Jeanna Capito and Jan Maruna to summarize the changes to the updated recommendation. Jeanna Capito discussed the update, stating that the joint work group of the Infant Toddler and Workforce Development committees recommended that all ISBE-funded infant toddler teachers in center-based programs who have primary responsibility for providing direct services must hold a Baccalaureate degree in Child Development or Early Childhood Education or the equivalent and a Gateways to Opportunity Level 5 Infant Toddler Credential by 2015. Kay Willmoth stated that the recommendation conflicted with Federal Early Head Start teacher requirements. Jeanna reminded the council that the requirements only pertained to staff in center-based programs receiving state Prevention Initiative funding, and Harriet commented that the funding programs receive through the Prevention Initiative could be used to hire staff with the qualifications outlined in the recommendation. Janice Moenster asked if the committee was thinking about recommending that staff in all Prevention Initiative programs meet these requirements, not just those that use a center-based model. Jeanna responded that center-based programs receive a higher funding amount per-child enabling them to support these requirements, and that the home visiting programs funded by the Prevention Initiative have rigorous training requirements in support of their program model. Phyllis Glink commented that she supported looking at the training requirements of home visiting models, and Harriet reassured her that work on this was being undertaken by the Home Visiting Task Force of the Council. Martha Arntson pointed out that there continue to be issues to work through, as the recommendation presumes that staff will be able to access Gateways to Opportunities funding to meet the educational requirements in the recommendation, but that some staff, particularly in Chicago and the suburbs, cannot access Gateways support because of their incomes. After discussion, Harriet Meyer asked for a motion to approve the recommendation. Ava Harston moved to approve the recommendation, and Teri Talan seconded. The motion passed with no opposing votes and Janice Moenster and Kay Willmoth abstaining.

2. Good Start Grow Smart Team: follow-up to December 1, Preschool for All/Head Start collaboration meeting (Gina Ruther)

Harriet Meyer then asked Gina Ruther to present a report from the Good Start, Grow Smart Team. Gina reviewed the team's plans to support community collaborations and coalitions, including developing models for hard-to-serve families and creating new processes to better review proposals for Preschool for All funding that include collaborations. She added that the group is also interested in supporting existing community collaborations, working to develop new ones, and implementing a plan for a regional system of collaboration coaches/mentors/technical assistance experts. Harriet thanked the team for their work.

11:45 – 12:35 (50 mins) Information (Harriet Meyer)

▪ Federal update (Sonya Anderson and Kay Willmoth)

Harriet welcomed Sonya Anderson from the First Five Years Fund who presented a summary of the early childhood provisions in the federal stimulus package. After the presentation, Kay Willmoth discussed the impact of the stimulus act on Head Start and Early Head Start. Elliot Regenstein commented that once federal regulations are created, the co-chairs plan to ask for a meeting with ISBE superintendent Christopher Koch regarding coordination on the funding available through the Department of Education (Title I, Special Ed, etc.) and ensuring that the Council is able to offer thoughts regarding use of the dollars to support early childhood programs and services. Elliot asked that anyone interested in participating in an ad hoc work group to discuss early childhood funding through the stimulus act contact Deanna Durica by February 27. Sarah Slaughter commented that information, once it is ready, will need to be "pushed out" to communities. Judith Walker Kendrick commented that she hoped that money would be able to reach community-based providers and added that the Council should consider looking further at the difficulty community-based providers are having with meeting increasing costs for doing business. Nancy Shier commented that she hoped that Good Start, Grow Smart would convene a group with membership that includes representatives from Chicago in order to provide coordination on program expansion, and stated that work on any capital funding that may be available should be also be coordinated.

▪ "Who's Caring for the Kids?" report (Teri Talan)

Harriet asked Teri Talan to review her presentation on the "Who's Caring for the Kids?" report. Teri provided information on the early childhood workforce in Illinois, which is detailed in the report Executive Summary. The report is a 2008 update to the original 2001 report. The report found that while the educational background of teachers has increased since 2001, the educational level of program directors has decreased. Teri attributed this to the retirement of many older directors, as well as there being little incentive for directors to work for higher credentials. Because of time constraints, members held their questions until after the related discussion on director credentials (see section below).

12:35 – 12:55 (20 mins) Discussion (Elliot Regenstein)

▪ Potential recommendations for Director Credentials

Elliot Regenstein asked Teri Talan to provide some background on director credentials in Illinois so that council members could then discuss whether this issue is one that should be referred to a Council committee for further investigation. Teri stated that 300 directors in Illinois currently have the credential, and 200 more are in the process of attaining it. She reiterated her point that there is little incentive at this point for directors to achieve the credential. She added that, in addition to the need to provide incentives to directors to work for the credential, it will also be necessary to review the scholarship system through Gateways to Opportunity to better provide financial assistance to directors interested in completing the coursework for the credential. Martha Arntson asked if data indicated that directors with credentials were more likely to leave community-based programs to work in other sectors. Teri stated that she did not have that data, but did know that 20% of those with director credential work in community-based organizations. Marsha Engquist commented that public funding now supports teacher quality, but does not support director quality.

She stated that she believes that directors become teachers because of the opportunity to increase their salaries. After discussion, Elliot suggested that the Workforce Development Committee and the Oversight and Coordination Committee conduct further investigation into creation of recommendations for director credentials.

12:55 – 1:00
(5 mins)

Wrap up

(Harriet Meyer)

Harriet thanked members of the Council for their participation and asked for a motion to adjourn. Maria Whelan moved to adjourn the meeting, and Ava Harston seconded. The motion passed unopposed.